

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
STATE OF MONTANA

BRIAN SCHWEITZER  
GOVERNOR



JOHN BOHLINGER  
LT. GOVERNOR

June 7, 2012

The Honorable Leon Panetta  
Secretary of Defense  
Pentagon  
Washington, DC

Dear Secretary Panetta:

As you know, the nation's Governors have been actively working with the Department of Defense and the Congress on issues related to proposed 2013 force structure and equipment transfers within the Air National Guard. Montana's situation is unique and I find it necessary to consider legal action to prevent a potentially catastrophic mission gap for the Montana Air National Guard.

Montana was notified of the BRAC decision to transfer our 120<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing F-15 mission to the California National Guard in 2005. I have fought that decision since then, but it became clear it was a battle I was unlikely to win. As a result, Montana's Adjutant General and I have worked feverishly to secure a replacement mission that would allow us to enhance and maintain the MANG's dual role mission of providing the manpower and resources for response to domestic emergencies. The DOD's 2013 proposal included the transfer of C-130 aircraft to Montana, a mission well suited for potential emergencies in our huge state and one that would ensure the Montana Air National Guard continued its tradition of proud service to the state and the nation.

However, as you know, during deliberations on their respective versions of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for 2013, Congress called for a freeze on any of the equipment and mission transfers in the Air Force 2013 proposal, a freeze which would include Montana's promised C-130s. There remains uncertainty about the freeze on the 2012 transfer of our F-15s because the House and Senate versions are not consistent and await action by a conference committee before the NDAA reaches the President's desk. Pending that Congressional action to either prevent the F-15 transfer or approve the timely transfer of the C-130 mission, California has initiated the steps necessary for the F-15 transfer and in fact, California National Guard members are in Great Falls today taking inventory of equipment and preparing to move some avionics equipment to Fresno.

Montana's situation is unique and I find myself faced with the necessity of using the authority granted me by federal law to ensure the Montana Air National Guard remains fully staffed and equipped while Congress sorts out the issues in the NDAA. I ask that you review this situation and consider potential solutions to this impasse. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "B. Schweitzer", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brian Schweitzer  
Governor